



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

Ep84: Grieving During Quarantine

You're listening to Episode 84 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 84: Grieving During Quarantine](#).

I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach helping music professionals get clear on their goals and find the time to get it all done, as well as the permission to get none of it done in exchange for time to process this new normal.

As many of you know, I've been less consistent in publishing new episodes over the last few weeks and I'm grateful for the love many of you have shared with me for the episodes that have come out, including [Episode 83 - The Pressure to Be Productive](#).

I know the majority of you have all been struggling with a variety of hurdles that have been thrown in your path due to this quarantine. I hope after Episode 83 you're reminded to be kinder to yourselves and realize there's no specific bar you have to reach for or level you have to achieve before this quarantine ends.

There's no rulebook for this and all that matters is that you do what's best for you. Sometimes that's a struggle in and of itself - figuring out what it is you need at any given moment. I've been taking time for myself to try to live more intuitively and listen to what my mind & body need to process a litany of things, one of them being the loss of a very special person in my life.

It's no surprise grief is something we have all been struggling with, for a variety of reasons and on a spectrum of levels and I thought now was a good time to address the grief we're all going through, the different types of grief we're all trying to process and share a few things I've managed to do to try to cope in hopes that it helps you cope a little as well.

I will say from the start, what I share represents my opinions and my experience with loss and please allow yourself to feel differently. I'm not claiming to have any answers, but I hope

The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast (c) 2019 The Rock/Star Advocate, LLC All Rights Reserved.

www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast

starting the conversation will allow you to share your own story.

Right at the start of this quarantine I lost someone I was very close with to suicide. Trying to navigate through this immense grief during social isolation has been extremely challenging, as it has been for anyone experiencing loss during this time and for many different reasons.

This is the hardest part of my story I've had to record, certainly since [Episode 16](#) which mainly focused on my relationship with my father, so please bare with me as I know you will. Out of respect for who we lost I will not be sharing any details about the loss, but rather what I've been experiencing in the weeks since their passing.

While it can be a blessing to hide out from coworkers or the hustle and bustle of commuting to work or running into neighbors and friends on a typical day out, a large part of surviving loss involves a certain amount of escapism - now, I'm not talking about ignoring the grief or running away from what you're feeling. But, I believe it's important to have a release valve - something to occupy your mind when you need a break from the crushing blow that is the loss you're experiencing.

Getting out of the house, surrounding yourself with close friends, taking a break from cooking or cleaning and just sitting out at a restaurant for a bit. Sitting at home, especially if you're not working or able to get lost in your normal routine can cause the mind to wander and fixate on thoughts you might otherwise wish to not focus on every second of the day.

My father passed away in our home seven years ago. In fact, seven years ago to the day I lost this person in my life. I was finally feeling like the pain of this day wasn't so visceral this time around. I even found myself taking calls with clients on a day I usually shut the world out. And then we received the call I always prayed we would never get.

The next day, the world, in essence, shut down which I didn't even take notice of as my own world had already stopped. As the days went on I kept thinking back to when we lost my dad and my first instinct was to get out of the house. To go somewhere else. To be somewhere else. I wanted distractions. I wanted normalcy.

You can't escape grief, you can't speed it up or skip over it - but when you self-isolate it can feel all-consuming. The loss and the notable difference of that person missing is heightened on

every level.

After the initial urge for distraction dissipated, I did self-isolate after my dad passed. In fact, at one point my doctor literally prescribed me dog so I would be required to get on a routine and force myself out of my apartment beyond just showing up for work.

I was working full-time at Crate & Barrel and needed to still bring in a paycheck and that's all I was managing to do at the time. My coworkers rallied around me, including my boy Zach Golden, who you may remember from my Spotlight interview in [Episode 17](#), shout out to Zach.

He's now an in-demand producer, but back in the day he and a few others played an integral role in getting me out and allowing me to be distracted for a bit or cry on their shoulder - whatever I needed that day.

I was able to pretend my dad was home in his house every now and then, or away on travel for work. I was able to busy myself and allow myself to find joy little by little in other things. I could almost experience grief on my own timeline - not to say I could always control it, but I had some freedom from it when I needed to come up for air.

My childhood friend Liana even came to live with me for a few months and it was a welcome change, giving me something else to focus on and be grateful for while I navigated a difficult transition.

This time, loss has felt very different. Obviously it would due to the type of loss being very different, but also because the natural support system one expects to find and be a part of has been different.

The person I lost was part of my support system. So already the grieving process was going to be altered in a major way.

Certain loved ones couldn't gather to say goodbye because they feared they had been exposed to the virus and didn't want to risk exposing others. Others wore masks at the service and questions were asked before automatically embracing - "Do you mind? Would you prefer not to hug?"

Ultimate, those of us who gathered said, "fuck it," and hugged as needed, but Purell was being passed around almost as much as tissues. It was as if every touch - as needed as it was - felt wrought with guilt - "Did I just put that person at risk? Did they just put me at risk? Are we doing the right thing here by gathering or being selfish? Does it even matter? Does any of this matter?"

I knew nothing about that day would feel natural, but this all brought it to a new level.

I read an [article in Rolling Stone](#) about Moral Fatigue that I've been quoting recently as it relates to productivity, but here's another quote that I resonated with at the service. It said, "We're faced with a lot of the same decisions from our pre-corona lives — except now, even the most mundane activities have turned into moral dilemmas. Whether it's trying to decide if you should visit a sick family member, order delivery, take public transit, or take a trip to the grocery store, we now have to think through the potential implications of many of our totally normal, everyday actions and decisions in a way we never had to before, because of how they could affect others."

I felt like this particular dilemma was one that was compounded - first, when you grieve you often turn inward to your own feelings and want what you want when you want it so the pain goes away (not be focused on other people's needs) and second, what you want at times is the support and closeness of other people (which again is at odds with what we know is best to practice at this time).

Yea, just breaking it all down brings on fatigue...

I remember waiting until 2 weeks after the service to hear if anyone we met with had come down with any symptoms. "Did you get a call? Have you seen any posts on Facebook? Quiet is a good thing, right? Everyone should be fine? I'm sure they're fine..." were what my mom and I would say to each other.

I recently moved into my Tiny House - a custom-built 300 sq. ft. space that I truly love. However, sitting in it alone with my thoughts wasn't the best place for me to be, and while concerns were had, precautions were taken so that I could go stay with my mom for a week or so in order for us to lean on each other while we mourned this amazing light we just lost and process the pain it had brought up around losing my dad 7 years earlier.

All of us grieving the loss of someone we love, or any type of loss for that matter, have had to find new ways to be support and new ways to give support. Part of my grieving process is to be of service to those around me who are grieving and I felt like I couldn't even do that, which made the pain feel even worse.

I don't handle change well. Any change. Good or bad I'm what my doctor calls a slow digester. It takes time for me to process what's different and how I want to react to it. I have almost a delayed reaction to life at times - I sit. I wait. I absorb. And then I act.

Smart? Maybe. At times. But it can often be my biggest hurdle.

I knew this time had to be different. I needed to allow the change to come and do my best to work within it. It's been a struggle not only processing this grief but also realizing the many different ways the grief is hitting me - ways I did not expect it to but how can we come to expect anything but uncertainty these days, right?

I've realized during my virtual therapy sessions how much past grief is being brought up and is intertwined with not only losing this person but also with the grief surrounding this pandemic.

My coach, the ever-inspiring Jamie Jensen, pointed out that this situation is unearthing and reopening old wounds, past pain, and causing a resurgence of deep reflection and healing that needs to happen in each of us in its own way.

There's the loss of loved ones, the pain from past loss it brings up for us, the global loss we're all feeling, the loss of our "normal life" just a few months prior, the loss of certain freedoms, the loss of the ease of mundane decisions, the loss of routine and basic predictability, the loss of income, graduations, weddings, birthday parties, drinks with friends, need I go on?

I think not. I promise this entire episode is not going to continue to be depressing, it gets better.

If you've lost a loved one, whether due to the virus or not recently, my heart goes out to you and please know my thoughts and prayers are with you. I've received many emails from listeners, in response to the episode on the pressure to be productive, who shared with me that

this pandemic has unearthed grief from a loss they experienced years ago and weren't expecting that.

So many are reliving traumas and heartache from experiences they thought they had "dealt with." I took a class in college one semester called The Psychology of Death and Dying. Yes, I was a music business major and yes, I elected to take this class.

I wrote a paper on grieving the death of a celebrity. I don't know about you, but Kobe Bryant's death hit me HARD earlier this year. I didn't even know much about him or his family and I certainly didn't know the other eight passengers who died with him, including his daughter, but MAN did I cry after hearing that news.

I was reminded of that paper I wrote where I learned that it's not so much the person we're mourning but rather processing the feelings it brings up for us, the memories it awakens in us, and the connections it shares to other losses in our life. We are all humans and we don't have to know a person directly in order to empathize with another stranger's loss.

Yes, people die every day. But now, the news tracks the death tolls by the hour and the unpredictability and the contagious nature of this virus has many on edge. Global grief is being felt by everybody.

You do not need to feel like you have to explain or justify the grief you are feeling. Let yourself feel it, honor it, and know that you will heal from it in time.

I'll admit my instinct in the beginning was to scoff at a high school kid who's sad they're missing prom when I felt like my own personal world was broken in a much more permanent way, but I soon realized grief is grief.

And we are all entitled to grieve what has been lost in our lives. Simple pleasures, cherished traditions, sanity-sustaining structure, human contact. It all matters.

As I explained in the last episode around productivity - fuck it. There's no blueprint for any of this so stop trying to live up to some specific standard as the valedictorian of the pandemic. You want to cry? Cry. You want to be angry? Be angry. You're already self-isolating so you've got no one to explain yourself to (and you wouldn't have to anyway).

The less we can judge ourselves and the more we can do what we individually feel we need to do to heal ourselves (hopefully without putting others' health at risk) the more empowered we will be to move forward from this crisis. Notice I didn't say bounce back - because back no longer exists. But we will thrive forward.

If you feel that you need a break from grieving and you want to find ways to create more and thrive more in your current situation, then here are a few tips I can share with you. Be warned, I am by no means a doctor and I sure as shit don't always succeed with this list - every day is different. BUT I have started to allow myself to let new joys into my life and I hope these tips help you do the same:

1. Allow yourself a 15-minute pity party and then shake it off - now, I say that with a grain of salt because if you need a 2 hour or a 2-day pity party depending on how strong your grief is right now - do you without any judgement from me. But, if you've got to pick yourself up and meet certain deadlines, in Episode 9 I asked Are Pity Parties Helpful? and shared my thoughts about their role in your daily productivity.

As I said earlier, there's no use in judging your feelings and the more you try to suppress certain ones you feel aren't "valid" the more they will drag you down. So cry it out, scream it out, take a shower, put on some obnoxious 90s pop and just start dancing and shaking it out. This is a fake it til you make it exercise so you can get the blood flowing and get some energy in you to take some action.

2. Earlier I mentioned how much I suck at change. One of the ways I was able to find my footing again and deal with all of the uncertainty and newness around me was to focus on what I'm grateful for each and every day. Even the smallest things and even the same things each day.

I'm grateful for those virtual therapy sessions and my coach, and I'm grateful to still have a job to throw myself into when I'm able to shift my focus. I'm also grateful to have a kickass Director of Rock/Star Affairs on my team who was able to take the reins for a bit so I could hit pause - shout out to Jenn O'Hagan.

And I'm grateful for this community of people who has remained open to me and who has continued to support the projects and services I've worked hard to create and share with you

all. Which brings me to number 3...

3. Be of service. This doesn't have to mean doing something that requires all of your energy and time. It means serve in a way that feels doable for you because it will get you focusing on something other than your loss and remind you that while this world has lost so many special people, you are still here, we are still here and it's important, when we're ready, to make the most of it.

Whether it's getting back to work and finishing projects you started or picking up groceries for someone who needs it, or making phone calls on behalf of a campaign you care about or donating money to a charity that fills you with joy or popping on an online forum to offer tips on something you do/know well that other people are struggling with, focusing on others can give you that escape you may need right now that you may not be able to get in other traditional ways.

4. Talk it out. Holding grief in, especially if you feel like your grief isn't as important as someone else's doesn't help you overcome it any faster or with more ease. Find a therapist you trust or someone who you know is experiencing similar grief and connect. And be honest with those you work with or live with if you need more time or support with a deadline or responsibility.

5. Lastly, the "typical" mourning rituals that are meant to bring us a sense of closure or healing may not exist right now, and that can bring its own level of pain and stress, so find ways to honor what you've lost in the best way you know how. I started to feel like myself again when I made the decision that the date March 15 would not go down as the darkest day for me. I lost 2 of the most important people in my life on that date and it was becoming very hard to process that so I decided to shift my perspective.

I started to research the number 315. I found that there's an Angel Number 315 in numerology that means the Ascended Masters are aiding and assisting you as you go through upcoming major life changes and it is up to you to stay brave, courageous and optimistic as the changes take effect.

I reached out to a close friend to ask if they'd collaborate with me to create an image that incorporates that message and number so that I could display it as a reminder to myself. The first afternoon we spoke was the first time I felt myself breathing with ease since the loss

because I was finally channeling the energy into something positive.

Grief is a tricky bitch. It can swallow you whole if you let it. The pain it brings can sometimes bring more comfort than the relief that's waiting for us, because the pain feels like it's keeping us closer to what we've lost.

Allowing joy to come through and accepting the change that has crossed our path does not erase the loss or drown out the grief. We will always be able to tap into that grief and sit with it whenever we need to, but we have to sustain and we have to keep going.

Whatever and/or whomever you are mourning during this difficult time, I hope you allow yourself to let joy in when it comes and give yourself permission to feel good and bad and everything in between, free of judgment and the pressure to get it right.

Thank you for listening.

If you need more support or someone to talk to, reach out anytime to suz@therockstaradvocate.com.

Until next time, Rock/Star! Have a wonderful week and I hope to see you back here next time so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.